

<b>Committee Title</b>	Student Voice					
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> November 2020					
<b>Title/Subject</b>	Students' Association NSS Survey Results 2020					
<b>Paper Presenter</b>	Susan Docherty – Student President					
<b>Brief Summary of Issues/Topic</b>	<p>The National Student Survey (NSS) asks final year undergraduate students <u>27 questions</u>, relating to 8 aspects of the learning experience. Students are also given the opportunity to make positive and negative comments in an open answer question. The results of the NSS are published at <u>Unistats.com</u> to help prospective students make informed decisions of where and what to study.</p> <p>The students' association question is "The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests" (question 26).</p> <p>The Students' Association receive a 56% satisfaction score in 2020, the highest score we have achieved since the introduction of Q26 in 2017 and above both the Scottish sector and UK sector average.</p>					
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	Information		Discussion	X	Approval	
	<p><b>Any member can ask a question by raising their voting card and being recognised by the Chair to speak.</b></p> <p>Student Voice are asked to note the findings within the report.</p>					
<b>Who have you consulted when developing the paper?</b>	Chief Executive					
<b>Staff/Student Protocol</b>	Yes		No	X	N/A	
<b>Will any decision approved directly affect the work of staff?</b>	Chief executive has been consulted					
<b>Should the paper be submitted to any other committee following its consideration/approval at this meeting?</b>	No					
<b>If yes, please state the committee and proposed date of submission.</b>						

# National Student Survey (NSS) Analysis 2020

## 1.0 Introduction

This report presents the findings from the 2020 National Student Survey (NSS), focusing on the GCU Students' Association's results for Question 26: *The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests*. This is the fourth year the question has been asked replacing a former question (Q23) on satisfaction.

The NSS launched at GCU on 13 February 2020 and ran until 30 April 2020, coinciding with the UCU industrial action as well as spanning the move to online teaching from 23 March 2020, in response to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The Office for Students (OfS) have assessed the possible impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the data and have concluded that the results could be published in full, and without any adjustment. This conclusion was reached because they did not find evidence that the reliability of the statistics had been affected by the pandemic. Neither did they find evidence that the results had been strongly impacted by the pandemic, to the extent that exceptional caveats or adjustments were needed. At GCU, the majority of students who completed the NSS (73%) did so before face-to-face teaching was ceased<sup>1</sup>.

## 2.0 Overall Results for Q26

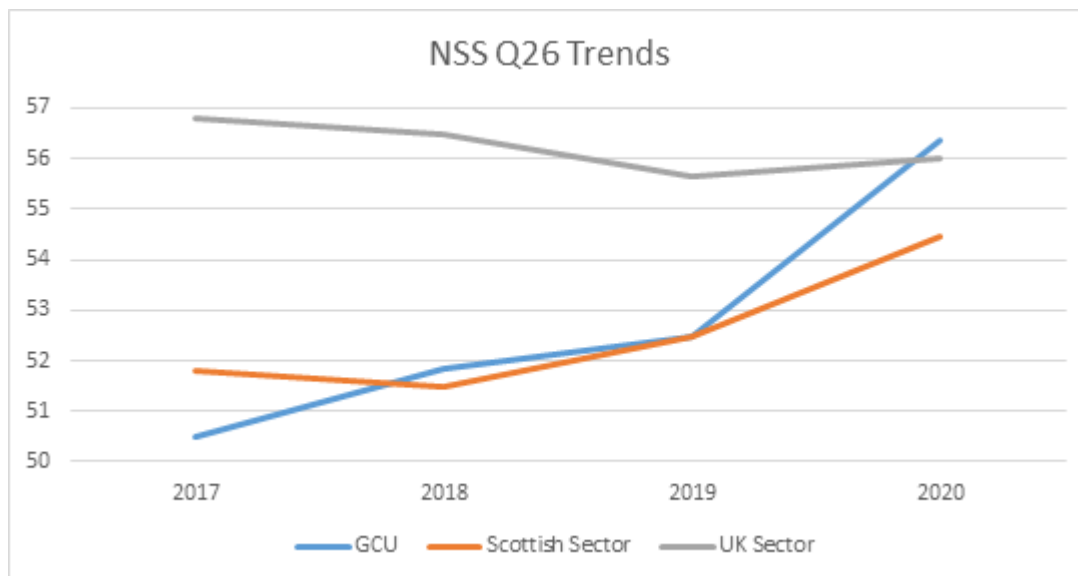
	GCU	UK	Scotland
2017	50.5	56.79	51.79
2018	51.85	56.47	51.48
2019	52.48	55.66	52.48
2020	56.36	55.99	54.47

This year's result of 56.36% on Q26 continues the upward trend equating to a 5.86-point increase over the last 4 years since the introduction of the questions. Moreover, 2019-20 results are the biggest year on year increase (+3.88). Seen in context of the Scottish sector score, we went from being exactly equal to the average score on Q26 last year to being close to 2 points ahead of the average even as the whole of the Scottish sector scores continues to rise (Table2). We have also exceeded the average UK sector score this year for the first time ever (table 3).

	GCU	Scottish	Difference
2017	50.5	51.79	-1.29
2018	51.85	51.48	+0.37
2019	52.48	52.48	equal
2020	56.36	54.47	+1.89
Change	+5.86	+2.68	

	GCU	UK	Difference
2017	50.5	56.79	-6.29
2018	51.85	56.47	-4.62
2019	52.48	55.66	-3.18
2020	56.36	55.99	+0.37
Change	+5.86	-0.80	

<sup>1</sup> Out of a total of 2152 GCU students who completed the NSS 2020, 1569 had completed the survey by Friday 13 March 2020.



As we have increased our Q26 score both overall and relative to the rest of the Scottish sector, we have increased our ranking from joint 10<sup>th</sup> place last year to joint 7<sup>th</sup> place this year

Institution	Q26 2017 Score	Q26 2018 Score	Q26 2019 Score	Q26 2020 Score	Movement	2020 (2019) Rank
University of St Andrews	67%	62%	65%	69%	▲	1 (2)
University of Dundee	65%	67%	66%	62%	▼	=2 (1)
University of Strathclyde	56%	52%	61%	62%	▲	=2 (4)
Robert Gordon University	56%	53%	57%	61%	▲	4 (7)
University of Stirling	51%	54%	53%	57%	▲	=5 (8)
Queen Margaret University Edinburgh	41%	52%	52%	57%	▲	=5 (10)
<b>Glasgow Caledonian University</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>56%</b>	▲	<b>=7 (10)</b>
Heriot-Watt University	54%	51%	53%	56%	▲	=7 (8)
University of Glasgow	54%	53%	52%	55%	▲	=9 (10)
Edinburgh Napier University	51%	48%	49%	55%	▲	=9 (14)
University of the West of Scotland	49%	51%	52%	53%	▲	=11 (10)
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	-	58%	61%	53%	▼	=11 (4)

University of Abertay Dundee	52%	50%	58%	53%	▼	=11 (6)
University of the Highlands and Islands	41%	47%	45%	49%	▲	14 (16)
University of Aberdeen	38%	42%	47%	48%	▲	15 (15)
Glasgow School of Art	60%	70%	63%	42%	▼	16 (3)
University of Edinburgh	42%	42%	39%	40%	▲	17 (17)

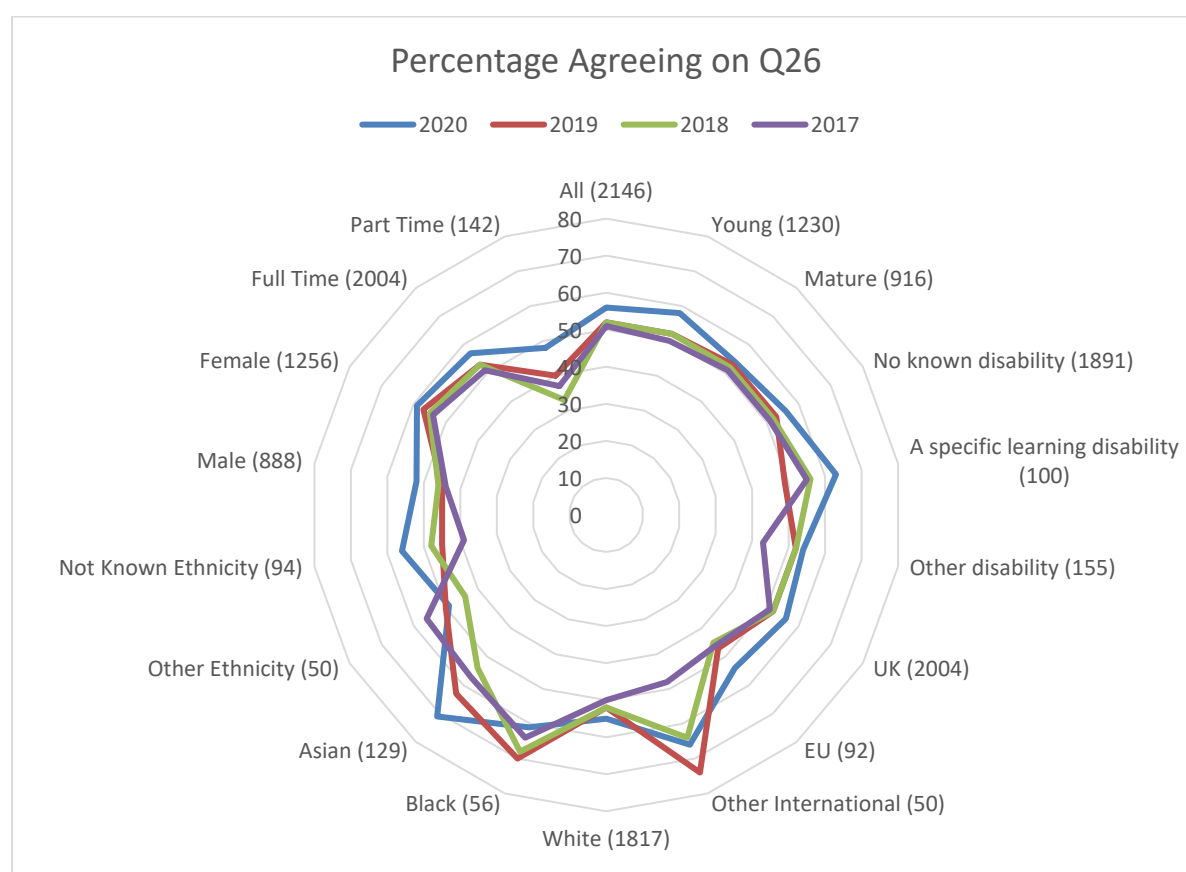
### 3.0 Segmentation Analysis

To better understand how the Students' Association is meeting the needs of students in terms of academic representation, segmentation analysis was undertaken for both demographic segments and subject area segments.

#### 3.1 Demographic Segmentation - Trends

Demographic Segment – Percentage Agreeing	2020	2019	2018	2017	Change between 2017 -2020
<b>Overall (2537)</b>	56.36	52.48	51.85	50.5	5.86
<b>Mature (946)</b>	53.77	53.31	52.37	50.82	3.35
<b>Young (1591)</b>	58.23	51.99	51.58	50.34	7.89
<b>A specific learning disability (117)</b>	63.44	48.75	55.86	55.22	8.22
<b>No known disability (2270)</b>	56.18	52.69	51.63	50.66	5.52
<b>other disability (150)</b>	54.11	52.08	51.85	43.48	10.63
<b>EU excluding UK (136)</b>	54.32	46.74	45.24	46.43	7.89
<b>Other (Domicile) (50)</b>	65.96	74.29	64.06	47.73	18.23
<b>UK (2351)</b>	56.21	52.33	51.75	50.73	5.48
<b>Asian (177)</b>	70.94	63.03	53.57	56.93	14.01
<b>Black (38)</b>	61.22	69.7	68.29	64.44	3.22
<b>Not known (ethnicity) (65)</b>	55.56	44.68	47.87	39.34	16.22
<b>Other (ethnicity) (45)</b>	48.89	50	44.19	56.25	7.36
<b>White (2212)</b>	55.46	51.57	51.72	49.97	5.49
<b>Female (1485)</b>	59.42	57.37	55.34	54.4	5.02
<b>Male (1052)</b>	52.06	44.56	46.19	43.97	8.09
<b>School Qualifications (1161)</b>	58.34	53.14	49.55	50	8.34
<b>HE (1262)</b>	54.79	52.14	54.58	51.25	3.54
<b>Other/Not known (114)</b>	50	48.61	44	46.83	3.17
<b>Full Time (2374)</b>	56.9	53.19	52.68	51.2	5.7
<b>Part Time (163)</b>	47.9	40.21	32.61	36.54	11.36

In line with the overall increase in the percentage of NSS respondents agreeing with Q26, there is also an increase amongst all demographics except three – Black students (-3.22), students who identify as coming from a non-white, black or Asian ethnicity (-7.36), and students who pathway into GCU (i.e. direct from school or through HE) is not known/other (-3.17). Both Black and Other (ethnicity) have less than 50 respondents per survey, so fluctuation is expected because of the law of averages, however worryingly, Black students' satisfaction is experiencing a gradual, consistent decline. Positively, several demographics have seen double digit increase in satisfaction including non-EU International students (+18.23), students who did not disclose their ethnicity (+16.22), Asian students (+14.01), part-time students (+11.36) and students with a non-learning specific disability (+10.63). If we take out demographic groups with less than 100 respondents (due to the flux they are prone to because of the law of averages), we see major gains in satisfaction amongst Asian students, part-time students, students who enrol with school qualifications (+8.34), those who disclose a learning difficulty (+8.22) and male (+8.09). The radar diagram below illustrates these peaks and troughs.



It is important to note that due to the law of averages, segments with larger number of students will be more stable than those with fewer students; therefore, the data for these groups will experience greater variability. Moreover, small gains in segments with large population will have larger impact on overall score than larger gains in segments with fewer students.

### 3.2. Demographic Segmentation – Sector Comparison

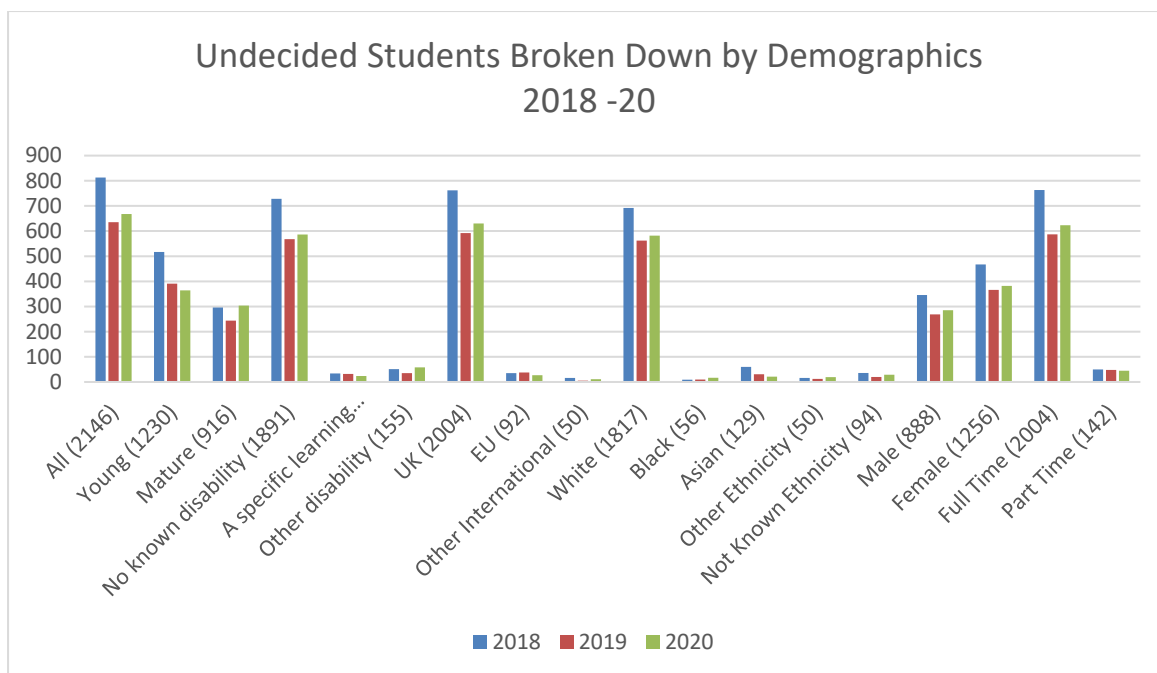
One significant thing about this year's NSS Q26 score, is that GCU exceeded the average UK and Scottish sector scores for the first time since the question was introduced in 2017. This also means that we are above average in most demographic groups as illustrated by the table below. There are a

few areas where we are still below average though, most concerning is Mature students (-3.06 below UK sector average). This is a big demographic at GCU and one that we had a significant win for this year with the opening of a Mature Students Room, yet we see our numbers only slightly increasing. We are also below average for students entering GCU from FE/HE, which would have some (but not all) overlap with Mature students. We had lower numbers despite having all of 2019/20 Full Time Officers from this background. It is recommended that we further develop and demonstrate how we represent these demographics of students.

Demographic Group	GCU (2020)	UK Sector (2020)	Above or below average
Overall	56.36	55.99	▲
Mature	53.77	56.83	▼
Young	58.23	55.73	▲
A specific learning disability	63.44	55.04	▲
No known disability	56.18	56.44	=
Other disability	54.11	52.54	▲
EU excluding UK	54.32	55.46	▼
International (non-EU)	65.96	60.33	▲
UK	56.21	55.55	▲
Asian	70.94	60.91	▲
Black	61.22	60.37	▲
Not known (ethnicity)	55.56	57.27	▼
Other (ethnicity)	48.89	55.26	▼
White	55.46	54.53	▲
Female	59.42	58.3	▲
Male	52.06	52.48	=
A Levels or equivalent	58.34	55.61	▲
HE (highest qualification on entry)	54.79	57.11	▼
Other/Not known	50	59.98	▲
Full Time	56.9	56.41	▲
Part Time	47.9	49.37	▼

### 3.3 Demographic segmentation – Undecided students

While we have increased our overall satisfaction with representing students' academic interest, we continue to see high number of students who are undecided (those who ticked "Neither" on Q26). 31% of all NSS respondents in 2020 were undecided. This is down from 34% for the previous two years. We were also successful in shifting 3% of young students from the undecided category to satisfied. The graph below illustrated the overall decrease in undecided students.



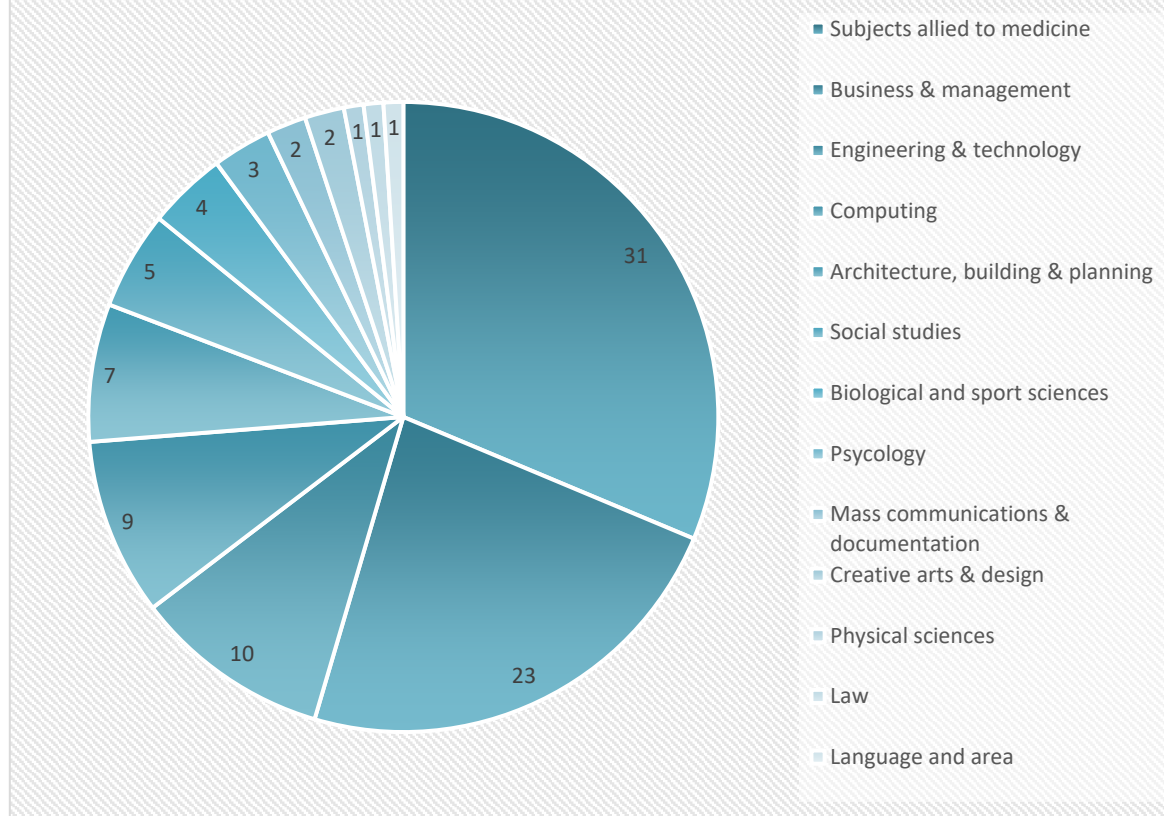
## 4.0 Segmentation by Subject Areas

The data for the NSS can also be segmented based on subject area of the respondent's degree. An analysis based on subject segments is even more important given the reformulation of the student union/association question from a focus on general satisfaction to satisfaction with academic representation.

### 4.1 Subject area segmentation at GCU

The NSS breaks down all academic degrees into a dozen subject areas that are listed in the following table along with the relative size of each subject area based on respondents to the NSS. The pie chart helps to illustrate the relative size of each subject area at GCU.

## Subject Area percentage of NSS Respondants 2020



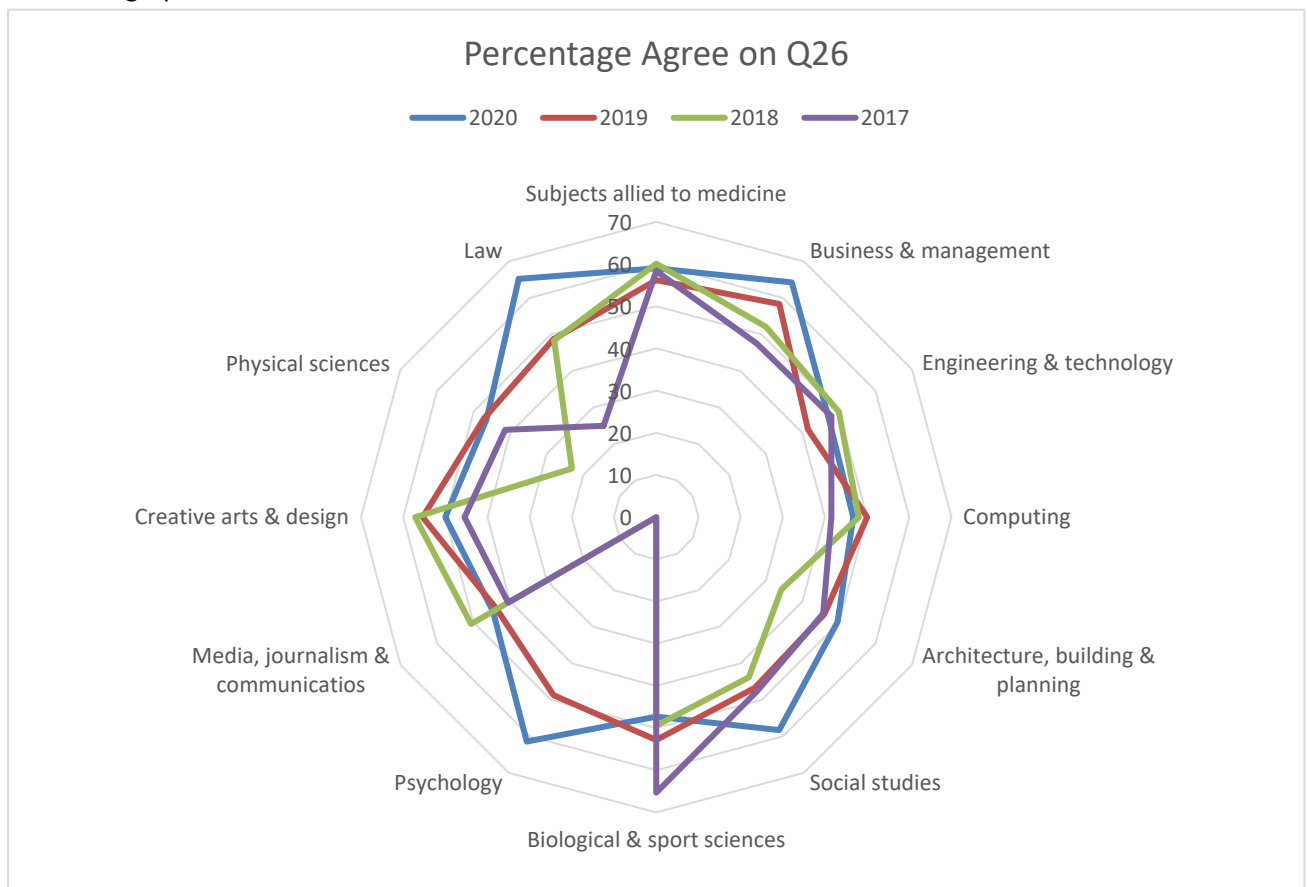
### 4.2 Subject Segmentation – Trends

Subject area	2020	2019	2018	2017	Trend
Subjects allied to medicine	58.98	56.19	60.09	58.33	=
Business & management	64.24	58.35	52.08	47.55	▲
Engineering & technology	47.14	41.55	50	47.94	▼
Computing	46.71	50	48.02	41.52	▲
Architecture, building & planning	49.64	46.02	34.26	45.68	▲
Social studies	58.3	46.74	43.86	47.7	▲
Biological & sport sciences	47.3	52.82	49.42	65.31	▼
Psychology	61.43	48.72	NA	NA	▲
Media, journalism & communications	44.68	43.64	50.68	40.52	▲
Creative arts & design	50	55.38	57.14	45.45	▲
Physical sciences	46.43	47.06	23.08	41.38	▲
Law	65.22	48.72	48.39	25	▲

In line with the overall increase, we also saw increases in satisfaction with the students' association serving their academic interest amongst most subject areas including a significant jump in the second largest cohort, Business and management (+16.69). However, the largest cohort made less than a .5 increase and the third largest subject area at GCU saw a decline in satisfaction (Engineering



and Technology -0.8). We also saw a large decrease in satisfaction amongst Biological and Sport Science students but a large increase amongst students studying social sciences. This is illustrated in the radar graph below



## 5.0 Summary

Overall, GCU Students' Association has increased our satisfaction on Q26 to the highest it has been since the introduction of the question in 2017 as well as exceed both the Scottish sector average score and UK average score for the first time. Our focus on expanding and communicating our relevance to students' academic interest has, overall, been positive. However, there are a few segments of the student population that need more focus including mature students, articulating students and students in allied health and engineering.